

bright new f😊tures

For Borders Children and Young People

*A Strategy for Children
and Young People
in the Scottish Borders*

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SECTION 1

Our Vision

All children and young people in Scottish Borders should have the best possible start in life regardless of their family background.

While recognising that the key responsibility for bringing up children and young people lies within the family, many children and their families go through stages in their lives when additional support may be needed. There are a number of key agencies within Scottish Borders that can provide support and assistance when required. A key purpose of the strategy is to make sure these agencies work more closely together to further the interests of children and young people. The strategy is consistent with the aims of the New Ways Community Planning Partnership.

This strategy describes what we expect to achieve in relation to children and young people in Scottish Borders. We have identified some core elements which provide a focus for our plans for improving the quality of their lives.

There are many services provided to children and young people in Scottish Borders. Much of what we do is already good and successful, but we need to improve services so they are better co-ordinated and more accessible to all children and families. Children and young people have all sorts of needs. Sometimes they need help and support and sometimes they need protection. They always need enjoyment and entertainment. Children and young people are the future and growing up should be fun. We need to make sure that we can provide what children and young people require, in a way that makes sense for them and their families.

What is this strategy?

This is a statement of what we want to happen for Scottish Borders children and young people over the next two years. We intend it to be a dynamic plan - we will change it if children and young people tell us that we have got it wrong or where circumstances or the law changes.

We will also produce an implementation plan, setting out how we will put the most important things in place. This will be updated regularly to show what progress has been made and what still needs to be achieved.

We will make sure that children, young people and their families are involved in the process of developing services, partnerships and new organisations. We will also tell them what has happened as a result of their involvement and explain why any changes were made. Sometimes we won't be able to make changes and we will always explain why we are not able to do so.

The strategy also recognises the need to direct resources to where these are most needed, whether by individuals, by families or whole communities. A detailed **Needs Index** has been developed to guide this particular aspect of the strategy. The index, which is in need of further development, uses data from different sources across all agencies.

What does the strategy include?

The strategy covers all Scottish Borders children and young people aged 0-18. It also includes some young people over 18 years in special circumstances, for example, care leavers and children or young people with complex needs.

Some children and young people may need more support to achieve the same outcomes as others. So although this strategy is for all children and young people, its focus is sometimes geared more towards those who are vulnerable or at risk.

Children and young people live in a range of different family situations and a lot of what we would like to achieve for them depends on the support we can give to those families. Some of our priorities for action focus on parents and carers, as they are the key support for children and young people.

How we developed this strategy

This draft has been produced in partnership by Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, the Police, Children's Reporter and the voluntary sector in Scottish Borders. We aim to consult with and involve a wider range of organisations, children and young people and their families.

Core Principles

We have developed core principles to shape this strategy. These core principles are consistent with the aims of the 5 Theme Teams which are developing the New Ways strategy which aims:

- To strengthen the economy of the Scottish Borders
- To create sustainable, vibrant communities

Children have rights and responsibilities and this strategy is intended to provide a framework for organisations in Scottish Borders working with children and young people. The core principles governing the way we interact with children and young people are:

- **Children and young people should have a secure home and family environment.**
- **Services should be child centred and should respect children and young people.**
- **Children and young people's safety should be at the core of decision-making.**
- **Agencies should work in a co-ordinated way to provide the best possible services.**
- **When children and young people need help, they should receive it as quickly as possible.**
- **Children and young people should be valued and not discriminated against.**
- **Children and young people should grow up within a stable and safe community.**

- Every child should be entitled to the same standard of service no matter where they live or their circumstances.
- Services should be focussed and planned around children's local communities.
- Children and young people should enjoy growing up in Scottish Borders.

How will the strategy be put into action?

Our strategy for children and young people is summarised under **6 core elements**, which are key to the overall well-being of all children and young people in Scottish Borders.

1. Health and emotional well-being
2. Staying safe
3. Realising full potential
4. Values and Citizenship
5. Material well being
6. A fun, attractive and child friendly environment

We have identified priorities for action under each element. They are detailed in **Section 2** of this paper. All of the organisations contributing to this strategy have a role to play in its successful development and implementation.

We are also developing ways for children and young people to tell us whether things are improving for them or where there are still gaps.

We will measure what is happening as part of the strategy so that we know it is making a difference.

Locality Planning and Service Provision

The key driver for taking forward the core elements of the strategy will be the development of **Locality Integration Teams (LITs)**.

The proposal is to form LITs in 5 areas in the Scottish Borders to be co-terminus with the areas of the 5 Area Committees. This structure is consistent with proposals to develop local Health and Care Partnerships which will focus on services for adults through the Joint Future Initiative. Within this structure there will be subdivisions to ensure a joined-up approach to planning and service provision in the catchment areas of each of the 9 High Schools.

This model will build on the work of integrated community schools and will develop this concept further to include all services to children and young people from 0 to 18 years.

A range of agencies and services will be represented on Locality Integration Teams. (See Appendix1) The model will be the same in each local area (locality) in order to ensure consistency of service and clarity of roles across the whole Council/NHS Borders area.

The membership of the locality teams will consist of senior staff from schools, managers of Social Work and Health children's services in the locality, Police, local youth work provision, and others as well as representatives from the voluntary sector, and the wider community including parents and young people. Personnel from Borders-wide services who have specific responsibilities within a particular area of children's services will also be involved with local teams.

It is imperative that any current and future local-based developments are planned to support this strategy.

It is proposed to develop a comprehensive Communication Strategy to maximise the involvement of all those with an interest in children and young people. This involvement will be essential for this process to work

effectively. An example of this is the SIP funded Empowering Communities initiative. Other approaches, particularly for involving parents and younger children, will need to be developed.

The function of locality teams will be to lead the development of local action plans relating to the delivery of services to children and families. These plans will respond to key national and Borders-wide strategies and will reflect issues raised by the local community. They will contribute to the Borders-wide targets taking into account local need and priorities.

Within these locality teams, opportunities for co-location of services will be fully explored where it will lead to a more cohesive approach, improved delivery of services and/or better value for money.

There is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken if the full benefits of the model are to be realised. Local managers of services and Head Teachers have considerable day-to-day responsibilities, which will not allow them to make the commitment necessary to ensure all aspects of the locality team plans are brought to fruition. A small team of Local Integration Managers (LIMs) will therefore be appointed to support the formation and the ongoing work of the five locality teams. A key function of the LIM will be to manage the budgets and other activities of the LITs in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Strategy Document and the policies of the council and its partner agencies as expressed through the Children's Change Group.

Borders-Wide Planning and Service Provision

Whilst the emphasis is to manage and plan services at local level as far as is practicable, it is recognised that well co-ordinated management and planning across agencies at a Borders-wide level is crucial to the success of this model. In pursuit of this goal, planning and service development officers from the key agencies will be co-located to facilitate communication and promote the breaking down of cultural and other barriers to change. The possibility of developing a similar model for senior managers of the key agencies will be given consideration over the coming year.

In addition to the above, it is also intended to further explore opportunities for co-locating staff from different agencies who specialise in a similar field of work. This has already been successfully achieved in the field of child protection and it is believed that similar benefits could result from the co-location of staff who work with children with disabilities, looked after children and young people who offend.

In addition to co-location, the development of an improved joint assessment and support framework along with a programme of joint training constitute the key elements needed for the successful integration of services for specific groups of children.

A consultation on the range of options for the provision of specialist services will take place during 2004-5 and plans implemented the following year and beyond.

Leadership & Partnership

In working towards an Integrated approach to Children's Services the following framework for the planning and co-ordination of services is proposed.

This framework has 4 essential components:

1. Scottish Borders Well Being Partnership

The Well Being Partnership operates as a formal sub-committee of Scottish Borders Council and Borders NHS Board and has delegated powers from the partner agencies to make decisions related to the joint working agenda relating to services for both children and adults. This includes considering and approving all joint planning and funding arrangements between NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council. Its key role is to provide a joint strategic direction to ensure that local policies are developed and agreed in line with both local and national priorities.

2. The Joint Management Group

The Joint Management Group consists of the Management Teams of Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders. The responsibilities of the group include the following;

- To commission work from the relevant service groups (including the Children's Change Group as described below) and to monitor progress,
- To monitor all joint financial arrangements,
- To monitor joint performance management arrangements and progress in meeting agreed targets,
- To ensure that joint strategies are developed for consideration by the Well-Being Partnership, and
- To act as a key group within the New Ways Community Planning structure

3. The Children's Change Group

The Children's Change Group provides the leadership for ensuring that the future development of services for children and young people is consistent with the framework described in the strategy. The group will champion the strategy and report to the Joint Management Group.

Membership of the group consists of senior managers from the following agencies:

- ◆ Education and Lifelong Learning
- ◆ NHS Borders
- ◆ Lifelong Care - Social Work
- ◆ Lothian and Borders Police
- ◆ Children's Reporter
- ◆ Borders Voluntary Youth Work Forum
- ◆ Borders Forum of Councils for Voluntary Service

4. Thematic Joint Planning Groups

There are a number of inter-agency groups which lead the development and implementation of strategies relating to specific themes such as Child Protection, Integrated Community Schools, Early Years, Looked After Children and Youth Justice. It is planned to review the work of these groups with a view to streamlining joint planning activity where possible and establishing clear relationships between these groups and the Children's Change Group. This may entail the commissioning of short-life groups to undertake specific tasks on behalf of the Change Group.

SECTION 2

1. Health and emotional well being

All children and young people should be as healthy as possible. We know that healthy children and young people have a better quality of life and are able to enjoy and take advantage of all the opportunities which are available to them. Children and young people who are emotionally well are more likely to become stable and settled adults. We know that children and young people who are physically active, are fit and eat well have fewer health problems when they get older.

The foundation for a child's health life is laid down even before they are born. We know that good health for children and young people is linked to a wide range of factors including adequate family income, affordable childcare, adult employment opportunities and an inclusive education system, and so this theme is also linked to others that follow.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Have the best possible start in life and all children and young people should be enabled to feel as fit and healthy as they can.
- (b) Have fewer preventable illnesses.
- (c) Have fewer mental health problems associated with depression, low self esteem and self confidence ensuring all children are valued and listened to.
- (d) Have more independence over their lives where they are disabled or have chronic illness.
- (e) Be empowered to take responsibility for their own health and make appropriate choices.

It is proposed that the following indicators are used to help us monitor progress:

- Decrease in number of low birthweight babies
- Increase in number of mothers breastfeeding
- Decrease in the number of women smokers
- Increase in volume of respite care for children with disabilities
- Increase in number of looked after children registered with a GP and undertaking an annual health needs assessment
- Decrease in incidence of post-natal depression
- Increase in number of young people engaging in physical activity

2. Staying safe - being safe, feeling safe, reducing risk, reducing offending

All children and young people should be safe and feel safe in their daily lives. Children develop and reach their full potential when they are safe and secure in their family, their community and their environment. Staying safe includes protection for children who suffer from abuse, bullying and victimisation. We recognise that some children and young people are likely to be victims of crime. It is important that children and young people feel included and valued in their community and that we support those particularly at risk of social exclusion. It is also important that we make places where children go as safe as possible to reduce the number of accidents both inside and outside the home.

Some children are in need of support and safeguarding. Some parents and carers may need extra help in bringing up their children. We must ensure that children who are at risk are protected, and that children who cannot live with their parents are cared for wherever possible in alternative families. We will intervene to protect and support children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Vulnerable children and their families will be identified and supported in a range of ways as early as possible.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Live in a safe environment.
- (b) Be able to travel safely, leading to fewer accidents and risk of accidental injury.
- (c) Be free from fear of being a victim of crime, including bullying.
- (d) Have good education and information about staying safe.

It is proposed that the following indicators are used to help us monitor progress:

- Increase in number of frontline staff who have completed relevant inter-agency child protection training.
- Decrease in number of accidents in the home.
- Increase in number of pro-active anti-bullying programmes in schools.

3. Realising Potential

All children and young people should have the opportunity to realise their potential in school, in the centres and in the communities in which they live and play. Through working effectively and collaboratively with schools and other agencies we can combat the barriers to learning and participation such as disadvantage and discrimination, whether on the grounds of poverty, ethnicity, gender or learning disabilities.

Personal achievement and enjoyment lay down the foundations for an individual's future. We know that growing up involves going through various stages of development and that all children and young people will go through key transitions. By this we mean significant life events such as puberty, starting and leaving school and getting a job as well as those such as family breakdown. At key points, we will offer extra support that may be needed to help children, young people and their parents to adjust to their new situation. We want to avoid children needing more services later on because we didn't provide the right help at the time.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Have equal access to high quality and appropriate learning opportunities throughout their life.
- (b) Have equal access to information.
- (c) Have support to enable smooth transition between key stages Home/Work/School.

It is proposed that the following indicators are used to help us monitor progress:

- 5% increase in educational achievement for the lowest achieving 20% of pupils.
- Improved access to education for pupils with disabilities.
- Increase in use of drop-in information sessions in schools and youth projects.
- Decrease in number of children failing to make a successful start to P1.
- 5% increase in educational achievement of looked after children.

4. Values and Citizenship

All children and young people in Scottish Borders should feel they belong to, are supported by and make an active contribution to their family, friends and their local communities. Children and young people need to be aware of their responsibilities and how their behaviour impacts on others. Joint initiatives to improve outcomes for children and families should involve communities, organisations and the private sector.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Be actively involved in the community and consulted as early as possible in all community processes.
- (b) Be responsible for fewer crimes.
- (c) Recognise their rights and responsibilities - promote active citizenship.

It is proposed that the following indicators will be used to help us monitor progress:

- Evidence of young people involved in Locality Integration Teams and other strategic and practitioner level fora.
- Reduction in the number of persistent offenders by 10% by 2006.
- Evidence of young people involved in Dialogue Youth and Empowering Communities initiatives.

5. Material wellbeing

We know that children and young people from disadvantaged groups experience poverty-linked disadvantages, so it is important to make sure that Scottish Borders children and young people have a standard of living which maximises their life chances. This means that they should live in warm decent homes, which are adequate and appropriate for their needs, are clothed and fed and live in families with adequate income. Poverty or low income should not be a barrier to children and young people participating in a wide range of activities. We realise that family poverty does not exist in a vacuum and is directly linked to the circumstances a child may live in. Parent and carers should be enabled to take responsibility for and control of their financial circumstances.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Live in families where household income and eligible benefits have been maximised.
- (b) Live in homes which are decent and fit for purpose.

It is proposed that the following indicators will be used to help us monitor progress:

- Decrease in the number of children living in low-income households.
- Increase in the rate of uptake of eligible benefits for disadvantaged groups and communities.
- Decrease in number of homeless young people.
- Decrease in the number of families who find childcare a barrier to employment and training.

6. Fun, attractive and child friendly environment

Scottish Borders should be a place where people want to live. Play, recreational and cultural activities are an essential element in the development of children and young people, providing them with enjoyment, with physical exercise and with learning experiences and skills which are of benefit to them now and in the future. Activities such as these contribute to overall health and wellbeing. They combat social exclusion, and may have an important role to play in crime reduction.

There is a recognition that some areas of the Scottish Borders evidence greater need because of geographical or social-economic circumstances. This strategy will take into account these issues, through the use of a developed Index of Needs, to ensure resources are targeted appropriately.

Scottish Borders children and young people should:

- (a) Live in a clean and safe Scottish Borders with high quality school grounds, play areas, open spaces and nature conservation areas.
- (b) Make full use of the sports, play, arts and entertainment activities that exist in Scottish Borders irrespective of where they live.
- (c) Have safe and appropriate places to meet with their friends and peers and be accepted by adults as members of their community.

It is proposed that the following indicators will be used to help us monitor progress:

- Increase in number of children and young people accessing and participating in leisure activities.
- Increase in number of children and young people accessing and participating in cultural activities.

CONCLUSION

The outcomes of the strategy will be achieved if all parties work together at each stage of planning, developing and delivering services across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and all agencies delivering services in Scottish Borders are fully committed to working in partnership.

The strategy sets out the ways in which we intend to improve a range of services to Scottish Borders children and young people by focusing on key local priorities. These improvements will take time and that is why we have developed a two-year strategy. Supporting all children and young people - regardless of their background or situation - to grow up to achieve their full potential is a challenge to us all, but we need to try and get it right. We only have the opportunity to grow up and to experience the joys of childhood once - this strategy will help us to work together to enable children and young people to enjoy this time as much as possible.

Appendix 1

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF LOCALITY INTEGRATION TEAMS

Membership

Primary School Headteacher/s
Secondary School Headteacher
Locality Manager or Senior Social Worker
Local Voluntary Youth Work Manager
Relevant Health Professional
Community Learning & Development Worker
Community police officer or superior
Librarian
Leisure Facility Manager
Local CVS co-ordinator
Church representative
Relevant co-optees (to be decided by the group)

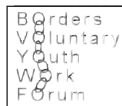
- Chairperson to be elected by the group.
- Professional support to be provided by the Locality Integration Manager.
- Each Locality Integration Team will develop mechanisms for the active and effective involvement of children, young people, families and the wider community with the aim of making services more responsive to locally identified needs.

Remit

- a. Develop and implement local action plans relating to the 6 core elements.
- b. Develop and implement a local interagency training strategy.
- c. Oversee the implementation of an integrated framework for the assessment and support of all children.
- d. Identify and respond to local issues and needs in relation to services to children and young people.
- e. Explore opportunities for co-location of services within the locality.
- f. Implement local monitoring and evaluation procedures in line with Children's Change Group policy.

AREAS COVERED BY LOCALITY TEAMS





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